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Speech by Karl Maron

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- At a meeting of the SED Kreis functionaries of Kreis Wilmersdorf on 25 October 1948 the main speech was delivered by Karl Maron, member of the SED Landesverband Berlin and leader of the SED faction in the Berlin City Assembly. Kreis Secretary Rohde was chairman of the meeting.

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[REDACTED] Comment: Karl Maron was First Deputy Mayor of Berlin until the Social Democratic Administration came into power as the result of the 20 October 1946 elections. Maron is generally considered one of the possible Russian choices for the position of Oberbürgermeister after the anticipated final split in the city administration.

- The following were the main points of Maron's speech, as summarized

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"The two points to be discussed tonight are inseparably related: The party conference to be held in December, and the assignments which the party workers can expect in the battle for Berlin.

"The basis of all plans for party work is the consolidation of the influence of the party and the complete political conquest of the Eastern Zone. Plans for this work can be made only on the assumption that the Berlin problem will be clarified. So long as the forces of reaction can maintain their established positions in Berlin, they will be able to carry out successfully their acts of sabotage. Thus the reconstruction of the Eastern Zone will be hampered from the outset and the successful accomplishment of our goals will be rendered problematical. No police measures and no degree of isolation of the western sectors of Berlin will suffice to stop the espionage and sabotage activity of the Western Powers as long as they remain physically in Berlin.

"Accordingly, one of the main goals of party work at present is to force the Western Powers to leave Berlin. Unfortunately this is more easily said than done, because under no circumstances can

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we afford to let the situation develop into open conflict. Agitation and propaganda are the only possibilities of profitable party activity to accomplish our goal. No stone must be left unturned to win the masses for the SED and to mobilize them against the western powers and the bourgeois parties.

"Unfortunately, however, one must admit that the party is not in a condition to begin this difficult assignment at once, because in recent years the false idea has spread through the party that socialism can be brought to Germany through peaceful means. Here is the first assignment of the coming party conference: the position of the Cominform on the question of the Yugoslav Communist Party must be used to teach all comrades that the way to socialism lies only in class warfare. There is no peaceful or opportunistic road to success. The revolutionary element in the party must at last come to the fore again, and all ideological embellishments must disappear. The new party line must be clear from the beginning. That point of the party program which permits class warfare only when peaceful methods are no longer possible must be dropped, and the thinking behind this theory must be abandoned. We must be fully aware of all the ultimate implications of the problem and hold ourselves ready to follow the goal even when blood, inevitably, is spilled. The party must under no circumstances forsake the battlefield without fighting, as just now is too often done.

"The battle will be especially difficult in the western sectors of Berlin, where the great mass of the people are already predominantly anti-socialistic. This means that particularly in the western sectors it is important to rid the party of all bourgeois influences. This is, in the final analysis, the mission of the Control Commissions, especially because the functionary corps has itself become to a great extent tired and bourgeois.

"The Landesverband, in its recent change of leadership, gave an unmistakable signal for the alteration of the character of party work. Litke and Matern were simply not capable of leading the party in its new assignments. Litke, moreover, was sick, and consequently unable to take part in the new work; Matern, as a reliable veteran Communist, will continue to have one of the most important posts in the Landesverband. The assignment of Jendretzky is sufficiently indicative of the coming party line. As an old member of the Rotfrontkämpferbund he will be able to lead the fight well, and as a veteran, experienced labor organizer he will be able to win the mass of the workers. This, in fact -- the creation of strong factory groups in industry -- is one of the important goals of the near future.

"The dream must finally be dispelled that our "big brother", the Red Army, will pull the chestnuts out of the fire. It is extremely doubtful that their help can be counted on in any way in so far as the work in the western sectors is concerned. At present the political situation forbids even the slightest Russian interference in the western sectors, and it is probable that this will be true even to an increased extent in the future. The party should be glad and thankful that the Red Army helps in such liberal measure where help is possible.

"It is therefore clear that the party must depend on its own capabilities and its own strength; and when it reorganizes itself according to the new line, it will have every chance of success. The party conference will present once more in clear terms the

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immediate aim of the party work: ideological education; basic reorganization of the party membership; criticism and self-criticism as the "motor" of party work; the exploitation of absolutely every opportunity for agitation and propaganda. If all these steps are taken, the "Berlin Problem" can be settled as quickly as is desirable. Should it be impossible to find a speedy solution of the Berlin question the SED will suffer for years as a result of this failure, even if the goal is eventually attained.

"It is impossible at the moment to assign specific tasks. The situation is so complicated that every day brings new work to be done. One must await the developments of world politics and meanwhile make oneself ready. For this reason it is important to prepare and carry on the party conference.

"It is likewise impossible just now to take a position on the question of the Berlin city government. That the Magistrat and the city administration are actually split becomes more clear every day. It will not be much longer until the western parties make the rift complete. It is not possible to visualize precisely how the Soviet sector will work out its own salvation, but one can comfort oneself with the thought of the Democratic Bloc, in which parties and mass organizations are represented in correct proportion.

"On the question of elections nothing can be said at the moment."

3. The discussion following Maron's speech revealed the inability of some functionaries to adapt themselves to the radical party line. An appreciable number of veteran functionaries would be unwilling to commit themselves without reservation to the agitation campaign. The arguments presented by many functionaries showed that they themselves are not able to answer the arguments of the Western powers in, for example, the question of the blockade of Berlin. In the [redacted] only about a third of the approximately 150 functionaries present at the meeting were ready to respond to the demands of the new party line.
4. Preliminary conferences in preparation for the December SED party conference began during the last week of October on the Stadtbezirk level. These conferences will be followed next week by conferences on the Kreis level, and later on a city-wide level. The conference in December will include delegates from the entire Soviet Zone and Berlin.

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